



Newly Appointed Commissioner



Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins

Long time Albuquerque resident Maggie Hart Stebbins is the newly appointed County Commissioner for District 3. She has an extensive background in state and national politics, is a Harvard University graduate, and most recently served as Special Projects Manager for the Mid-Region Council of Governments. There, she helped put the New Mexico Rail Runner Express on track and worked to promote water conservation and a federally-funded workforce development program.

From 2002 to 2004 Maggie was the press secretary for the Office of the Majority Floor Leader in the New Mexico House of Representatives. Her duties included developing and managing media contacts for the House Leadership and 43 Democratic house members relating to a number of complex issues including tax reform, education, public safety, economic development and domestic violence prevention.

She has also worked as the campaign manager for state representative Raymond G. Sanchez, a lobbyist for the New Mexico Foodbanks Association, a Harvard teaching assistant, and in various capacities in the U.S. House of Representatives. Over the years, Maggie has been an active member of many local boards of directors including Albuquerque's Open Space and Biopark Advisory Boards, the New Mexico Children's Foundation, the Bernalillo County Metropolitan Court Judicial Selection Commission, and the local YWCA.

Commissioner Hart Stebbins was appointed on May 12 by Governor Bill Richardson to fill the position recently vacated by District 3 Commissioner Deanna Archuleta and will serve through the 2010 general election. The new Commissioner is committed to working to attract new, environmentally responsible employers to the County. She will also be focusing her efforts on upgrading services at the Metropolitan Assessment & Treatment Services Center (MATS), the opening of the Stanford Health Clinic and La Mesa Neighborhood Dental Clinic. She will continue the implementation of the UNM Pathways model and the oversight of the University of New Mexico Hospital (UNMH) and will work collaboratively with the National Dance Institute to continue the renovation of the historic Hiland Theater.

Weed Abatement Ordinance

Bernalillo County has passed its first weed abatement ordinance. Its goal is two fold—to reduce the incidence of wildfires and to provide a cleaner, more beautiful place in which to live. The ordinance was tailored after a portion of the County's existing fire code and took effect on June 11. So far, more than 500 acres in Bernalillo County have been burned by wildfires since the start of 2009.

"The objective of the weed abatement ordinance is to establish minimum regulations consistent with nationally recognized standard practices for safeguarding life and property," says County Commissioner Michael C. Wiener, sponsor of the ordinance. Citations can be issued if County workers discover areas that violate provisions in the ordinance. Penalties will be set by a judge.



Area that violates provisions in the ordinance.

Animal Care Ordinance

Bernalillo County's new and improved Animal Control Ordinance and Fee Structure took effect June 8. While much of the 32-page document remained the same, there are some important changes.

Current changes affecting all Animal Owners:

All dogs, cats, and ferrets are required to have permanent identification in the form of a microchip, tattoo, or collar ID, in addition to being required to have a rabies vaccination and license. All fees are increasing but provide incentives for responsible dog and cat owners. Chaining to stationary objects will no longer be allowed.

Current changes affecting most Permit Holders:

Sales of dogs and cats will be from the permit holder's residence and will no longer be allowed along the roadside or from a commercial business. Shelters may have off-site adoptions with permission from the site owner. A female dog or cat may not have more than one litter in a 12 month period if the owner does not have a professional or hobby breeder permit.

Current changes affecting Violators:

The language for animal cruelty has been expanded to include acts of negligence in providing basic or emergency medical attention, maintaining an animal in an enclosed environment without provisions to prevent pain or suffering, and performing ear-cropping, de-barking, or tail docking on an animal or otherwise endangering



Bernalillo County Animal Care Officers caring for their four-legged friend.

an animal's well-being (excluding procedures completed by a veterinarian).

The language for fighting animals has been expanded to include possession of fighting paraphernalia, use of bait animals, and training or conditioning animals for fighting.

To read the ordinance in its entirety, go to www.bernco.gov, click on A-Z, click on animal control, and then click on the ordinance.

Health Council Releases Improvement Plan

The Bernalillo County Community Health Council will be releasing its new Health Profile and Community Health Improvement Plan in July and is interested in coming to your association meetings to distribute copies and present on health information specific to Bernalillo County and your community. Please contact Leigh Caswell, Coordinator at lmason@bernco.gov or 314-0467. Also, look for a copy of the report on www.berncohealthcouncil.org.

Fire Restrictions Imposed In Bernalillo County



County firefighters at South Valley fire.

On March 5, 2009, the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution to impose Fire Restrictions throughout the unincorporated area of Bernalillo County. Although not usually in place until May, dry conditions, high winds and low precipitation have increased the chance for fires.

The following types of burning are prohibited: agricultural burning, bon fires, burning of explosives, campfires, ceremonial fires, cooking fires, hot torch burning, ignition of rocket motors, open burning, open flames, slash piles, smoking and weed burning. Charcoal broilers, barbecue grills, wood and coal burning stoves used outside of private dwellings are classified as campfires and are prohibited. Citations can be issued for illegal burning.

Keep your property fire safe by cleaning up trash, weeds, leaves and branches where they collect; near fences, in gutters or along the edge of the house. "The Bernalillo County Fire Department needs your help to do everything we can to protect lives and properties in our community," says County Commissioner Michael Brasher. For a complete list of the Fire Restrictions, go to bernco.gov.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

The State of New Mexico will receive approximately \$1.85 billion dollars in direct appropriations and \$37 million dollars in funds available for competitive bidding, for an estimated \$2.2 billion dollars in federal stimulus money. Funding will be available in the form of both competitive grants in which non-profits and government agencies are eligible, with some monies directed toward local governments for shovel ready projects.

The Recovery Act specifies appropriations for a wide range of federal programs. These include creating clean and efficient energy; science and technology investment; re-building of aging infrastructure such as roads, bridges, transit and waterways; education; tax cuts to create jobs; and expanding healthcare coverage and lowering costs.

The goals of the U.S. Recovery and Reinvestment Act are to award and distribute the funds in a quick and efficient manner that is transparent to the public. Recovery funds are used for authorized purposes and will be monitored to prevent fraud, waste and abuse. Projects funded through local governments that meet specific goals and targets will avoid unnecessary delays and costs.

Two areas of investment that can have a substantial impact on New Mexicans and Bernalillo County residents are assistance to first time homebuyers and COBRA premium reductions for healthcare coverage. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority has set up a special program for down payment assistance that works in conjunction with a federal tax credit for first time purchasers that qualify. The tax credit is 10 percent of the home's purchase price, up to \$8,000. The home must be purchased by December 1, 2009. For specifics contact the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority at (505) 992-9635.

COBRA provides workers who have lost their jobs the opportunity to purchase group health coverage. The ARRA provides for a COBRA premium reduction and opportunities for additional healthcare coverage. Those eligible pay 35 percent of their COBRA premiums with the remaining 65 percent reimbursed to the healthcare provider through a tax credit. The premium reduction applies to coverage after February 17, 2009, lasting up to nine months. For more information contact the US Department of Labor at 1 (202) 501-3911.

Bernalillo County Builds Interest in Growth

Bernalillo County Commissioners recently passed its own local stimulus package—an ordinance to make it less expensive to build on County property through the end of the year. The County would charge lower impact fees for residential, commercial, and industrial building projects. Impact fees for residential projects will be cut in half. Fees for small commercial and industrial projects will be slashed by three-fourths.

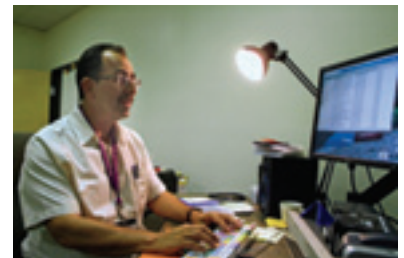
An impact fee is a fee that is implemented by a local government on a new development to help pay for some of the public services that the new development will require," says Bernalillo County Commissioner Art De La Cruz. "That would include things such as wider roads, more parks and open space, and increased fire and sheriff's protection. These fees are usually implemented to help reduce the economic burden on local jurisdictions that are trying to deal with population growth within their areas."

The County currently collects some \$50,000 a month in impact fees. The new ordinance will reduce that to about \$20,000 a month. County officials believe the deficit can be made up by collecting more gross receipts and property tax revenues on the newly generated construction projects.

Bernalillo County Works to Strengthen the Economy

Commissioner Art De La Cruz and Bernalillo County are following through with legislation to stimulate the local economy through the creation of over 100 temporary positions in Bernalillo County. The \$500,000 that was earlier approved by the County Commission is being used to finance the temporary jobs that began on June 1, 2009. The temporary positions are expected to last up to three months. Many of the jobs are for the maintenance of County buildings and property. Others include computer technicians, truck drivers, clerical help and parks and recreation personnel.

Commissioner Art De La Cruz who represents the South Valley and all of District 2, sponsored the successful measure that provides for these temporary employment positions.



Robert D. Garcia,
an economic stimulus employee.

Neighborhood Coordination



Neighborhood Coordinators Bernadette Miera (center left) and Lenton Malry (standing).

In 1993 the Bernalillo County Neighborhood Notification Ordinance was adopted. This ordinance requires the official recognition of neighborhood associations and a legal obligation for the County to notify the associations of applications for zone changes, site development plans, special use permits, and other land use proposals that directly affect their neighborhoods. To further enhance the relationship between Bernalillo County and neighborhood associations, the position of Neighborhood Coordinator was created.

The Neighborhood Coordinator serves as a liaison between neighborhood associations in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County and County government. The coordinator oversees and facilitates neighborhood activities and assists associations by working with various County departments to address issues and concerns, provide resources, and disseminate information on County services and events. Some of the resources for neighborhood associations include speakers for meetings, educational workshops for specific needs, and e-mail and printed material about public services and events.

What Does a Neighborhood Association Do?

A Neighborhood Association is a self organized group of citizens in a given geographical area. Residents work together to tackle pressing issues and concerns and advocate for solutions by involving themselves in their local government to improve living conditions and quality of life in their neighborhoods. Some of the issues neighborhood associations address include: graffiti, crime, beautification, safety, parks and open spaces, zoning, land use planning, traffic control, and neighborhood clean ups.

If you are interested in forming a neighborhood association or would like more information on County resources, contact the Bernalillo County Neighborhood Coordinator, Bernadette Miera at (505) 468-1279 or by e-mail at bmiera@bernco.gov.

Get Emergency Alerts On Your Cell

Bernalillo County and its Emergency Communications Center are pleased to announce that residents and business owners in the unincorporated areas of Bernalillo County may now register their cell and/or VoIP phone number(s) to receive important and/or emergency notifications. The new Emergency Notification System can send thousands of messages in a very short amount of time, specifically targeted to certain areas.

Examples of Emergency Notifications include:

- Evacuation notices caused by emergency situations such as fires, floods, and severe weather
- Notifications of dangerous situations such as a chemical spill, law enforcement investigation or other instance in which you may be instructed to stay in your home

If you have a landline, your phone number has automatically been entered into the system and you have already been set up

to receive emergency communications. If you have a cellular/VoIP phone number and you would like to receive emergency notifications that way, please register that number with the County Emergency Communications Center's Target Notification program on the website [@www.bernco.gov](http://www.bernco.gov).

Keep in mind, however, that when you register and the Bernalillo County Emergency Communications Department sends an emergency message you will receive the notification even if you are NOT in the affected area at the time. Also, if you change your cellular/VoIP phone number, please re-register.

"We are the only agency in Bernalillo County to offer a Target Notification System (Reverse 911) and this new feature only helps us get important messages out," says County Commission Chair Alan Armijo, "When there is an emergency situation, our primary focus is the safety and welfare of our residents."

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For more information visit our website at www.bernco.gov

or call the Neighborhood Association Coordinators Bernadette Miera at 468-1279 or Lenton Malry at 768-4364